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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 15 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Bucharest Declaration of the Third Meeting of Heads of State and Government of South-East European Countries, adopted on 12 February 2000 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 30, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ion GORITZA
Ambassador

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Annex

# BUCHAREST DECLARATION OF THE THIRD MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

12 February 2000

We, the Heads of State and Government of the South-East European countries, Mr. Emil Constantinescu, Mr. Bülent Ecevit, Mr. Ljubco Georgievski, Mr. Mugur Isărescu, Mr. Ivan Kostov, Mr. Ilir Meta and Mr. Costas Simitis, met in Bucharest on 12 February 2000, at the Third Summit of the countries of this region. Present at the meeting were the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of these countries, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mr. Aleksandar Dimitrov, Mrs. Nadezhda Mihaylova, Mr. Paskal Milo, Mr. George Papandreou and Mr. Petre Roman, as well as Mr. Jadranko Prlić and Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak as observers and Mr. Bodo Hombach, special coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, as a special guest of the Chairman-in-Office.

This Third Summit of the countries of South-Eastern Europe constituted for us a new opportunity to continue our comprehensive dialogue. We have examined the prospects for enhanced stability, security and democracy in our region during the year 2000, a matter that concerns not only us, but also the whole European and Euro-Atlantic community. We have also considered ways and means to foster regional cooperation, aimed particularly at the economic and social growth of our countries and, in this context, the impact the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe could have on the progress and the prosperity of our region.

On the eve of the Third Millennium, we have reiterated the European orientation of our countries as an integral part of their objectives for political, economic and social development. It is our firm conviction that Europe cannot be complete without the countries of South-Eastern Europe, without their peoples representing old civilizations and cultures that have traditionally contributed to the formation of the contemporary European identity, enriching the European culture. We welcome the intensified efforts for widening European integration and we emphasize the needs for including the countries of the region in the process of deepening and broadening the European and Euro-Atlantic political, security and economic structures. Our endeavors to promote regional cooperation are also directly linked with the aspirations of our countries to speed up their integration in these structures.

In this last year of a century marked by devastating wars and conflicts, many of them originating from and affecting our region, as well as by dictatorial political regimes, we have signed today a Charter on Good Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, aimed at opening a new page in the history of our

region, whose future lies in peace, democracy, economic prosperity and full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The Charter emphasizes our commitment for economic and democratic reforms. This Charter constitutes a genuine Code of Conduct for the relations among our countries and, at the same time, a real Action Program for our future cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. This Charter is the first common political document of this nature in the modern history of our region. Opened for the participation of all the countries belonging to the South-Eastern part of Europe, this Charter constitutes also a major political contribution of our countries to the implementation of the principles and the objectives of the Stability Pact.

While reviewing the state of our cooperation, as a major initiative coming from within the region, we have taken note with satisfaction of the large international recognition it received during the year 1999. The South-East European Cooperation Process was accepted by the last NATO Summit in Washington as contributing to the Alliance's effort to enhance regional security and was invited to be among the contributors to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. OSCE, reiterated at the Istanbul Summit in November its determination to work closely with other international organizations and institutions on the basis of the Platform for Co-operative Security for the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area. In this context, we welcome the designation of a country from our region, Romania, as the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in 2001 and a member of the OSCE Troika starting with the year 2000.

In this framework, we fully recognize our countries' responsibility to work within the international community to develop a shared strategy for stability and growth in this region and to cooperate with each other and with the international community to implement that strategy. At the beginning of year 2000, we solemnly declare that we are ready to assume our duties and to actively participate, alongside with the international community at large, in the peaceful settlement of the tensions and conflicts in our area and in preventing the breaking out of new conflicts in South-Eastern Europe. We are determined to further consolidate our cooperation and to do our utmost so that the end of this century marks the end of wars in our region, and that the shared Euro-Atlantic values of peace, democracy, prosperity and respect for human rights take root in South-Eastern Europe.

At the same time, convinced that the full normalization of the bilateral relations between all the states in the region plays a role of paramount importance in building up a climate of confidence and mutual understanding, we are determined to make every effort during the year 2000 to reach this goal. In this context, we encourage further simplification of the formalities in order to facilitate the circulation of persons, goods and capitals among our countries, and with the rest of Europe within the framework of the existing international obligations.

We are all concerned with the fact that the situation in some parts of our area continues to pose potential threats to the stability and security in the region. In spite of the international community's efforts, the prerequisites for a democratic and sustainable development are still to be achieved. The evolution of the situation in Kosovo will continue to influence the state-to-state and interethnic relations in the area and consequently the whole region. Against the background of years of repression, intolerance and violence in Kosovo, the challenge is now to build a democratic, multi-

ethnic and multi-cultural society, on the basis of substantial autonomy, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords, as well as the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, pending on a final settlement in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1244. Our countries have firmly supported this Resolution, which we expect to be fully implemented and strictly adhered to by all concerned. We reiterate today our conviction that this Resolution constitutes the solid base for a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Kosovo crisis. We reconfirm our countries' commitment to contribute, to the extent of their capabilities, towards achieving this objective.

Our countries strongly support the international civil and security presences in Kosovo, through the UNMIK, the KFOR, and the OSCE mission and we hope that they will be provided with the necessary resources and means to perform their duties. We welcome the high priority attached by them to guaranteeing security to all citizens in Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or cultural background, so that all the residents of this province could contribute to and benefit from the creation of a peaceful and democratic society. While taking note of the improvement in the security climate in Kosovo, we strongly condemn the continuation of ethnically motivated violence, intolerance or threats, by the activity of various organized crime structures and/or individuals still present in the area and by other negative developments. We welcome the action taken by the international presence in Kosovo, for the implementation of all the provisions of the Resolution 1244, including strengthening the legal and institutional framework for assuring the public order and preparing local elections during this year. Considering that the administration of Kosovo should be carried on with the participation of the local population, we appeal to their leaders to work together and with the representatives of the international presences there, towards creating a multi-ethnic society where the rights of all citizens, all ethnic and religious communities are fully and equally respected.

At the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, last November, it was agreed that the democratic shortcomings of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remain one of the fundamental sources of grave concern in our region. All responsible democratic political forces of this country must steer the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia firmly back on the path towards democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are now making an appeal to all the citizens of this country to embark upon a course of democracy and reconciliation, in order to bring back this state in the family of the international community. Our countries are ready to further promote the humanitarian assistance programs directed to the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, such as the EU "Energy for Democracy" and the twinning projects, in order to alleviate the impact of the sanctions on the population. We insist that no restrictions should be applied by the authorities to humanitarian operations on their territory. In this context, while considering the sanctions against FRY as an important mean for achieving the common objectives of the international community, we share the view that their implementation should avoid to the extent possible direct negative consequences on the Yugoslav citizens. We regret that prevailing circumstances precluded the presence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at this Summit, while reiterating the FRY's status as a participating country to the SEECP, in accordance with the provisions of the Crete and Antalya Summits documents. We agree to consider the FRY's chair as temporarily vacant, to be resumed as soon a onditions would allow it.

Our previous Summits dealt largely with the evolution of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an observer state to the SEECP, considered as a test–case for Europe. We remain committed to a democratic, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina based on the General Framework Agreement for Peace negotiated in Dayton and signed in Paris. We underline the importance of improving the functioning of this country's common institutions and of the continuing assumption of the tasks undertaken now by the international community. We appeal to the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take decisive steps to bring its two entities closer together within their single state, in the interest of its citizens, of its stability and prosperity.

We reaffirm the particular importance of increased cooperation with NATO on security matters in the region, by participating in its specific mechanisms such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Partnership for Peace Program and the Consultative Forum on Security Matters launched by the Alliance following its Washington Summit. We commend the role of the South-Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial for the security dimension of our countries' cooperation and the activation of the Multinational Peace Force/South-Eastern Europe Headquarters established on a rotational basis in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. We are looking forward to the building up of the European Security and Defense Identity within the Alliance and declare our countries' willingness to cooperate with it. We welcome the adoption by the recent OSCE Summit in Istanbul of the Charter for European Security and, as OSCE participating countries, we reconfirm the commitments assumed herewith.

Our countries pay a great deal of attention to enhancing regional cooperation in fighting organized crime, illicit drug and arms trafficking and all forms of terrorism. In this context, we have been pleased to visit the SECI Regional Center for the Combating of Transborder Crime in Bucharest and we reconfirm our countries' determination to fully cooperate with this Center to attain our common goals in this field.

We express our appreciation to the European Union for launching the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe aimed at sustaining the countries in our region in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity, in order to achieve stability in the whole area. We appreciate the first practical steps taken for the implementation of the Pact, in particular the first rounds of negotiations of the specific mechanisms of the Pact. In this context, we welcome the meeting of the Working Table on Economic Reconstruction, Development and Cooperation held recently in Skopje. We also welcome the commitments made by the Greek Government and the European Commission to allocate financial resources for future projects within the Stability Pact and we hope that the other Facilitator States and International Financing Institutions will act in the same direction. We acknowledge with satisfaction the establishment in Thessaloniki of the European Agency for Reconstruction, with a branch office in Pristina. We hope that new operational centers and branch offices will be established in each of the other countries in the region. We welcome the recent agreement in Brussels reached by Bulgaria and Romania, with the assistance of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact and the European Commission, which constitutes the solution concerning the construction of a second bridge between these countries on the Danube river, as a first successful step in the implementation of major regional projects under the aegis of the Stability Pact.

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Seven months after the launching of the Stability Pact, the implementation process is still at its beginning. We look forward to speedy action in the implementation of the various regional projects put in motion by the Working Tables. In this respect, we look to the Regional Financing Conference as a major test of the commitment by the international community to assisting the transition and the development of our countries towards stable democracies and open and viable economies, and to give a strong impetus to the implementation of the Stability Pact projects towards the level of the hopes of our peoples. We reiterate our strong commitment to reform and to carrying out the reform processes endorsed by the Stability Pact, starting with the investment compact and the anti-corruption initiative, as a pledge to the new and equal partnership brought about by the Pact. While understanding the long-term nature of the Pact, the lack of quick concrete results would jeopardize the credibility of the Stability Pact within the public opinion of our countries. We therefore call on the international community to live up to the expectations created by the Pact and respond adequately to the real needs of our countries and our region. Without underestimating the other dimensions of the Pact, we place a strong emphasis on its economic dimension, which will require the biggest share of the financial resources. We hope that transparency for project evaluation, selection, approval and financing shall be assured so that the implementation of projects under the aegis of the Stability Pact starts as soon as possible. Our countries will make the utmost efforts to fulfil the responsibilities assumed in the Stability Pact. We also believe that financing the reform process will be paramount to its success and will significantly contribute to the improvement of the business climate in South-Eastern Europe.

We have stressed our countries' willingness, as participants in the Stability Pact, to be actively involved in projects for reconstruction in Montenegro and Kosovo, FRY, as early beneficiaries of the Stability Pact, as well as in the rest of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, when conditions would permit it. Our countries' interests are also going towards promoting major regional infrastructure projects supporting the economic development of South-Eastern Europe, securing international support for increasing trade in the area and for creating a friendly investment climate, aimed at enhancing cross-border cooperation and achieving sustainable growth in the region. We have noted with interest the commitment made by the major facilitators of the Stability Pact to develop specific tools to allow an active participation of companies from our countries in procurement and services for reconstruction and development projects in the region, through fair and transparent competition, according to multilaterally agreed principles.

We positively appreciate the recent involvement of the European Commission in the efforts for restoring the navigation on the Danube, by offering financial assistance to the Danube Commission for this purpose and look forward to the early implementation of this initiative. The Yugoslav authorities should respect their obligations stemming from the Belgrade Convention of 1948 to facilitate the international efforts to this end. We expect that this major European waterway be soon reopened for free navigation in the Novi Sad area, to the benefit of promoting European trade. We also hope, while embarking effectively upon the implementation of the Stability Pact, that solutions will be found for direct or indirect compensation of the losses our countries registered as a result of the conflict in Kosovo, starting with the two most affected states, as well as for taking progressive steps towards the alleviation of the negative effects on the economy of our countries by the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Bearing in mind the role and the potential of the SEECP in promoting a common approach aimed at fostering regional cooperation, we have substantiated the efforts made within our initiative to harmonize and coordinate the positions of the participating countries towards the implementation of the Stability Pact. The document "Preliminary Proposals of the SEECP Countries for the Stability Pact" provided a first joint platform outlining the common needs and expectations of our countries from the Stability Pact. We reaffirm the primary responsibility of our countries for achieving the goals of the Stability Pact, including their involvement in the current decision making process to set up the priorities of regional projects, for a proper allocation of resources. We believe that SEECP is in the position to fully participate in the establishment of priorities of such projects, whether they are promoted by the interested countries or they are on the lists of other regional initiatives our countries are participating in. We task the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of our countries with preparing suggestions for a specific SEECP mechanism that will set the priorities for regional projects in the Stability Pact framework, with the view to preparing an Action Plan for their implementation.

We have highly appreciated the activities carried on within the SEECP by our countries' Ministers of Foreign Affairs since the last SEECP Summit in Antalya, which contributed to a great extent to the promotion of this regional initiative in the international community. We have also commended the industrious work of the political directors.

We express our warm thanks for the hospitality of Romania for hosting the Bucharest Summit Meeting of the South-East European Cooperation Process.

We have decided that the next meeting of Heads of State and Government of the participating countries to the SEECP will take place in Skopje at the beginning of year 2001.

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